

CLASSIFICATION SECRET **SECRET**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION FROM
FOREIGN DOCUMENTS OR RADIO BROADCASTS

REPORT

50X1-HUM

QD NO.

COUNTRY USSR

DATE OF
INFORMATION 1949

SUBJECT Geographical

DATE DIST. 20 Feb 1950

HOW
PUBLISHED Semiweekly newspaper; bimonthly periodicalWHERE
PUBLISHED Moscow

NO. OF PAGES 4

DATE
PUBLISHED 23 Nov 1949; Nov/Dec 1949SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

LANGUAGE Russian

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS INFORMATION AFFECTING THE NATIONAL DEFENSE
OF THE UNITED STATES WITHIN THE MEANING OF ESPIONAGE ACT 80
U. S. C. 31 AND 32, AS AMENDED. ITS TRANSMISSION OR THE REVELATION
OF ITS CONTENTS IN ANY MANNER TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON IS PRO-
HIBITED BY LAW. REPRODUCTION OF THIS FORM IS PROHIBITED.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE Newspaper and periodical as indicated.

THE NEED FOR A MILITANT GEOGRAPHIC JOURNAL

CRITICISM OF JOURNAL'S IDEOLOGICAL BACKWARDNESS

Literaturnaya Gazeta
No 94, 1949

Izvestiya Vsesoyuznogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva (News of the All-Union Geographic Society) is the oldest Russian geographic journal. During the 80½ years of its existence, many valuable articles dealing with physical and economic geography and with the ethnography and history of geography have appeared in it. It is difficult to name a corner of the earth which this journal has not covered.

The Soviet reader opens it with interest, for where else can he find such a thorough and comprehensive description of the nature, economy, and people of his own and foreign countries or news of the latest theoretical and practical developments in physical, economic, political, and military geography?

Geographic science in the capitalist countries has long been a servant of the moneyed interests. In our time, many geographers in Britain and the US are scouts of the imperialistic monopolists, and the enemies of democracy and socialism widely use "geographic" arguments to justify their policy of encroachment. Anglo-American "geopoliticians" and "geostrategists" are going all out to convert geographic science into a tool of the imperialistic aggressors. Therefore, the reader of the leading Soviet geographic journal wishes to find in its pages also an exposure of the reactionary nature of contemporary bourgeois geography.

In the 1949 issues of Izvestiya Vsesoyuznogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva, we find articles about the glaciers in the Pamirs and in the Dzhungarskiy Alatau, about the lakes of West Siberia, about the origin of the tayga, etc. The journal published articles on subjects connected with the Stalin plan for the transformation of nature, including articles on steppe afforestation, drought control, and soil erosion control. It published L. S. Berg's article, "Russian Discoveries in the Antarctic and Contemporary Interest in It," in which it was pointed out that

- 1 -

SECRET

CLASSIFICATION

SECRET

STATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NAVY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NSRB	DISTRIBUTION																	
ARMY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AIR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FBI																		

SECRET
SECRET

50X1-HUM

Russian geographers and sealers were the first to find certain Antarctic lands and that for this reason the Soviet Union has a legal right to these lands. The journal published new historical material about Russian expeditions and explorations.

And yet the reader was not satisfied. He did not find what he was looking for in the pages of the journal. Its content was largely limited to articles on physical geography and historical subjects, and articles of an economic and political geographic nature very seldom appeared.

This is all the more remarkable because the division of economic geography is one of the main divisions of the Geographic Society. Why then does the organ of the society avoid economic and political problems? During the entire year, only one article on the capitalistic countries appeared in the journal, and that on such a subject as "Changes in the Administrative Divisions of India After Partition." Almost nothing was published about the economic geography of the Soviet Union. And it is precisely on these subjects that Soviet geographers and Soviet society expect to receive the latest information from the journal.

The Soviet nation is pressing with great enthusiasm toward fulfillment of the postwar Five-Year Plan. New industrial centers are being built, new cities are growing up, new roads are being constructed, the country is being reconstructed and electrified. Socialist reconstruction is resulting in permanent changes in the geographical distribution of production forces. Collectivization of agriculture and industrialization have been carried out widely in the Baltic republics, in the Moldavian SSR, and in the western Ukrainian and Belorussian oblasts. Is it right, then, that the journal of the Geographic Society refrains from reporting these changes in economic geography?

The journal assigns almost no space to articles which describe the way of life of the multinational Soviet people. And those articles which have been published are confusing and testify to a lack of editorial perspicacity.

The article by L. V. Tazikhina, "On the Kolkhozes of Gor'kiy Oblast", is an example. The author sets out in the right direction by pointing to the need for "attentive, continuous, and definite study of life on the kolkhozes," but he soon departs from this premise and gives a superficial and unimaginative description of life on two kolkhozes on the basis of incidental observations made during a 6-day visit.

During this time, the author saw only that on one kolkhoz "electrical power poles stood in the middle of the street for its entire length," on the other kolkhoz "schools, animal feed cribs, and the medical station were located in old buildings, and electric power poles stood along the side of the street." Then he mentions that "the working footwear of all was bast shoes with puttees," and that on the Kolkhoz imeni Timiryazev "there are no old maids or widows because everyone is glad to become a member of the kolkhoz and [to be in a position] to get married." The successes of the kolkhoz and the increase in grain production are explained thus: "As soon as our director knew that he could get mineral fertilizer in the city, he took it without delay and we were able to fertilize our grain fields in good time." The author summarizes the cultural life of the village as consisting of movies, square dancing, waltzing, and walking. Is it to the credit of the journal to present such a caricature of kolkhoz life and to permit people to speak who observe the new life with indifferent eyes and who painstakingly search out the survivals of the old? Furthermore, the writer was describing the best kolkhoz in Gor'kiy Oblast, where 116 of the men were awarded the medal, "For heroic service in World War II from 1941 - 1945."

There are numerous other "white spots" [unexplored areas] in the subject matter of the organ of the All-Union Geographic Society, the emblem of which is the globe pictured on the cover of the journal. It is unnecessary to point out that the reader is very interested in the people's democracies, in the Korean People's Republic, and in democratic China. But this interest, apparently, is not shared by

- 2 -

SECRET

SECRET

SECRET

SECRET

50X1-HUM

the editors of Izvestiya Vsesoyuznogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva, for in 1949 not a single article was published about the physical or economic geography of the people's democracies even though quite a few Soviet geographers are busy studying these countries.

The editors quite willingly publish historical material in the journal. In 1949, historical articles made up one third of all the material published. Naturally, such things as the chart of Pushkin's travels, the earliest descriptions of Tadzhikistan, a large early map of Kamchatka, an old city plan of Petersburg, and the early history of the settlement of the Easter Islands are interesting.

It is not permissible, however, to disregard contemporary geographic science by such delving into the past. It is impossible to agree that more attention should be paid in a geographic journal to the difference of opinion between Hipparchus and Eratosthenes or to a criticism of Ptolemy than to the basic differences between Soviet and bourgeois geographic science or to a criticism of pseudoscientific bourgeois theories.

It would seem that the primary tasks of Izvestiya Vsesoyuznogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva ought to be to solve theoretical problems, to expose bourgeois geographic theories, and to combat their infiltration into Soviet geography. What does the criticized journal offer in regard to these tasks?

Articles on theoretical and methodological problems in physical geography appear from time to time, although for the most part they touch on narrowly specialized problems. However, the journal does not even attempt to deal with theoretical problems in the fields of political, economic, and military geography. And it is precisely in these fields that a great effort to expose bourgeois theories, to combat them, and to prevent them from being introduced into Soviet geographic literature is needed.

Such Soviet periodicals as Sovetskaya Kniga (Soviet Book), Voprosy Ekonomiki (Problems of Economics), and Narodnoye Obrazovaniye (National Education) have already sharply criticized the gross methodological errors of a number of Russian economic geographers. Why then does Izvestiya Vsesoyuznogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva maintain silence and give the impression that sharp theoretical controversies in economic geography and in physical geographic methodology do not concern it?

It is well known that it is impossible to advance Soviet economic and political geography without studying the general works of Lenin and Stalin, which provide the theoretical key to all basic problems in political and economic geography. However, in the journal one does not see a single article which deals with this question or attempts to develop the position of Marxism and Leninism in the geographic field.

The Soviet press has done much to expose geopolitical and other unscientific concepts which are used to place a "geographical base" under the appeal for war. This work of exposure is continuing and must continue, since the tendency of imperialistic politicians to use a geographic cloak for their propaganda is not diminishing but increasing. Who, if not the Soviet geographer, is to lead the struggle against bourgeois pseudogeography? But Izvestiya Vsesoyuznogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva stands aside from this struggle. Neither in 1949 nor in 1948 did the journal publish a single serious article intended to expose bourgeois pseudoscience. The timid attempt by Prof O. Konstantinov to criticize some American "theorists" in his article, "Concerning the So-Called 'Principle of the City Taking Precedence,'" cannot be taken into account since Konstantinov does not clarify his own theoretical position, and the depth of his "criticism" is merely the reproach of Jeffersonian "one-sidedness and idealism."

- 3 -

SECRET

SECRET

SECRET

50X1-HUM

The struggle against bourgeois ideology is the important and urgent task of Soviet scientists. And bourgeois ideology does not disappear by itself. It is overcome by a relentless struggle. Soviet geographic science must be a militant, Party science.

Although it has done useful and important work, Izvestiya Vsesoyuznogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva has as yet not reorganized its activity sufficiently. Much of its content is still unpolitical and objective. It still stands apart from life and the real tasks of Soviet science. The decisions of the TsK VKP(b) in regard to ideological problems have not found adequate expression in the journal.

The Journal must become the militant organ of the Geographic Society of the USSR and must represent Soviet geographic science. ... P. Alampiyev

QUESTIONNAIRE ON JOURNAL'S CONTENT

Izvestiya Vsesoyuznogo
Geograficheskogo Obshchestva
Vol 81, No 6, 1949

The editors ask that readers of this journal send replies to the following questions:

1. Is the over-all bent and the over-all nature of the journal satisfactory to you?
2. If not, what specifically does not please you?
3. What changes would it be desirable to make in content and make-up?
4. In which number of the journal did you find something that interested you as a geographer?
5. On which subject of interest to you did you find no articles in the journal in 1949?
6. In your opinion, articles of what type and content should be published more frequently in Izvestiya VGO? (In answering this question, it is requested that you state your general geographic interests and not a geographic specialty to which you personally are most devoted.)
7. Which articles published in 1949 did you consider interesting as to content and timeliness?
8. Which articles published in 1949 aided you directly in your practical, scientific, or teaching activity?
9. Did you notice any ideological errors in the articles published in 1949? If so, name the articles in which they occurred.
10. Were you satisfied with the criticisms found in the journal? If not, state in what way they were inadequate and of what, in your opinion, they should consist.
11. Additional concrete suggestions for improving the journal in addition to those made above.
12. Remarks pertaining to subjects not covered in this questionnaire.

-E N D -

- 4 -

SECRET

SECRET